

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

----- 116128

R 210600Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2367

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1607

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: SREF, MILL, SN, VS

SUBJ: GOS DISPOSITION OF VIETNAMESE C-130

REF: STATE 087831

1. I RAISED SUBJECT OF DISPOSITION VNAF C-130 WITH PM LEE
APRIL 19. I STRESSED FACT THAT PROBLEMS OF C-130 AND 56 REFUGEES
WERE SEPARATE ISSUES SINCE NEITHER USG NOR GOS WANTED TRY FORCE
REFUGEES BACK TO VIETNAM IN THE C-130 OR OTHERWISE. I ALSO
STRESSED URGENCY OF RETURNING C-130 TO OPERATIONS IN SVN.
I REFERRED TO THE LOCKHEED OPERATION, THE EASE OF GETTING VNAF
CREWS IN AND OUT, AND ALL OTHER POINTS WHICH HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED.
RE THE REFUGEES, I SAID WE CONSIDERED THIS PROBLEM ESSENTIALLY
ONE FOR GOS & GVN TO SORT OUT, AND THAT IF GOS SOUGHT TO
RESETTLE THEM THROUGH UNHCR OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODY OR
PRIVATE AGENCY, WE WOULD BE PREPARED SUPPORT THAT EFFORT. I
ALSO SAID WE HAVE THE VIETNAM REFUGEES PROBLEM UNDER GENERAL
REVIEW.

2. LEE HAD OBVIOUSLY HAD A THOROUGH BRIEFING ON THIS MATTER
AND SAID HE WOULD NOT DEVIATE FROM THE POSITION DR. GOH HAD
TAKEN. THE C-130 WOULD ONLY BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WHEN WE OR SOMEONE
ELSE HAD TAKEN THE 56 REFUGEES OFF THEIR HANDS. HE EXPRESSED
NO INTEREST IN THE UNHCR APPROACH. WE DISCUSSED THE MATTER FOR
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BETTER PART OF HALF AN HOUR BUT HE WAS TOTALLY UNYIELDING.

I MENTIONED FACT THAT RESIDUAL TITLE OF AIRCRAFT RESTED WITH USG BUT HE COUNTERED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD IT WAS UNDER OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF VNAF WHICH I ACKNOWLEDGED. HE SAID, IN ANY CASE, PLANE WAS IMPOUNDED UNDER SINGAPORE LAW AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO GET IT RELEASED. I TOOK THAT REMARK TO MEAN THAT IF WE TOOK LEGAL ACTION TO RECOVER THE AIRCRAFT IT MIGHT BE A PRETTY TIME CONSUMING MATTER.

3. IN LIGHT OF GOS HARDNOSED POSITION ON THIS MATTER, I SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO WAITING TO SEE IF THERE IS A CHANGE OF HEART OR POSSIBLY A CHANGE IN OUR POLICY RE SUCH REFUGEES. I AM SEEING DR. GOH TOMORROW ON ANOTHER MATTER AND WILL EXPRESS TO HIM MY DISAPPOINTMENT ON THIS ISSUE. CRONK

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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05 JUL 2006

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